

Appl. No.: 10/043,577

Amdt. dated 02/02/2006

Reply to Official Action of November 7, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present application currently includes pending Claims 1-30 under consideration. Applicant appreciates the indication that Claims 5-11, 16-22 and 25-30 are allowable. However, final Official Action continues to reject Claims 1, 12 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,493,409 to Lin et al.; and continues to reject Claims 2-4, 13-15 and 24 as being unpatentable over the Lin patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,700,360 to Visser.

In order to advance the present application to issuance in the most expeditious fashion, Applicant has rewritten allowable Claims 5, 16 and 25 into independent form, including all the recitations of any intervening claims. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that allowable Claims 5, 16 and 25 are in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, Applicant has cancelled independent Claims 1, 12 and 23 without prejudice to subsequent presentation in a continuation application. Also, Applicant has amended dependent Claims 2, 3, 13, 14 and 24 to depend from respective ones of allowable, and now independent, Claims 5, 16 and 25. Applicant respectfully submits that these amendments do not raise any new issues and do not introduce any new matter, and should therefore be considered and entered by the Examiner.

As all of original and amended dependent Claims 2-4, 6-11, 13-15, 17-22, 24 and 26-30 directly or indirectly depend from respective ones of allowable independent Claims 5, 16 and 25, Applicant respectfully submit that amended dependent Claims 2-4, 6-11, 13-15, 17-22, 24 and 26-30 are allowable for at least the same reasons as allowable independent Claims 5, 16 and 25. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 1-4, 12-15, 23 and 24 as being unpatentable over Lin alone or in view of Visser are overcome.

Appl. No.: 10/043,577

Amdt. dated 02/02/2006

Reply to Official Action of November 7, 2005

CONCLUSION

In view of the amended and cancelled claims, and the remarks presented above, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew T. Spence
Registration No. 45,699

Customer No. 00826

ALSTON & BIRD LLP

Bank of America Plaza

101 South Tryon Street, Suite 4000

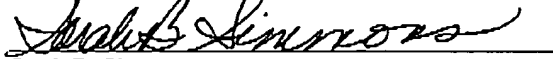
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000

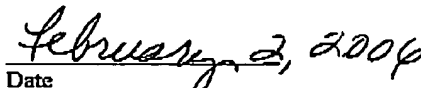
Tel Charlotte Office (704) 444-1000

Fax Charlotte Office (704) 444-1111

CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Fax No. (571) 273- 8700 on the date shown below.


Sarah B. Simmons


Date